

March 19, 2019

Congratulations on your recent success! As you continue to campaign and begin to look toward a possible transition team, the Metropolitan Planning Council wants to reiterate our offer to be a resource to you and your team.

Our city and region are at a crossroads. Will we continue to tolerate policies that actively or passively support economic and racial segregation? Or will we embrace inclusion? Will we continue to let our aging infrastructure stymie economic growth and cause flooding, public health risks and waste? Or will we reinvest? Will we continue to short-change planning for the future of certain neighborhoods? Or will we develop a range of tools so all areas have a brighter future?

For more than 85 years, the Metropolitan Planning Council has worked to create prosperous, equitable and sustainable communities throughout the Chicago region by implementing solutions that result in vibrant neighborhoods, quality housing and transportation, a strong economy, well-managed natural assets, and efficient delivery of government services.

We hope this candidate briefing book crystallizes critical information for you and your advisors. Using the following four categories, MPC catalogs the challenges and opportunities facing the City and prioritizes urgently needed policy solutions to:

- **Keep** – Initiatives that are generally going well, and should be continued. They can certainly be improved, but they have served Chicago well and have a lot of positive momentum.
- **Build** – These are nascent activities which have seen some progress but have yet to truly flourish, and need improvements.
- **Start** – These are ideas that are past due, and that we need to get moving on. This category will likely require the most effort and fresh approaches and partners.
- **Stop** – These are behaviors and policies of the City of Chicago that do not serve us well. They should cease, and quickly.

MPC does not endorse candidates, but we regularly conduct briefings with candidates and their advisors, and have a long history of serving on the transition teams of governors, mayors, and county executives, regardless of party affiliation. We would be honored to do the same should your campaign prove victorious. We are always available to talk through these issues with you and your team. To schedule a briefing, please contact Vice President Josh Ellis at (312) 863-6045 or jellis@metroplanning.org.

Sincerely,



MarySue Barrett
President

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Preparing Chicago for Climate Change

Implement Resilient Chicago

The city should implement the *Resilient Chicago* plan for inclusive growth and a connected city. *Resilient Chicago* sets forth a framework for building urban resilience that addresses the chronic stresses—such as racial inequity—and acute shocks—like heat waves and severe flooding—facing the City of Chicago. It lists 50 actions focusing on building stronger, equitable neighborhoods, robust infrastructure and prepared communities. City departments and agencies are leading many actions, and will be a critical partner in multiple other actions led by civic organizations and community stakeholders.

Executive Order

Resilient Chicago was released on February 14, 2019 as an outgrowth of Chicago's participation in the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities initiative. Developed by city staff and a diverse Steering Committee comprising neighborhood, civic, private and philanthropic partners, it is a solid foundation to build upon.

Recommendation: Issue an Executive Order requiring relevant City of Chicago departments and agencies to commit to *Resilient Chicago* implementation.

Implementation

There are structural changes needed to remove the discriminatory practices and policies that have caused disparities disproportionately burdening Chicago's most vulnerable residents. We must take action in order to build our resilience benefitting everyone. This cannot just be another plan sitting on bookshelves.

Recommendation: Implement *Resilient Chicago*. Convene a diverse Implementation Committee, expand public engagement and commit to making progress on prioritized actions.

Staffing

Housed in the Mayor's Office, the Chief Resilience Officer (a position funded by the Rockefeller Foundation) was the central point person at the city spearheading the effort to develop *Resilient Chicago*. **With the pending mayoral transition, it is unclear who will oversee implementation and how.** City staff and departments are identified as leads on some

actions. For others led by partners, city staff will need to coordinate with partners. The city should play a role providing general oversight for strategy implementation.

Recommendation: Dedicate adequate city staffing resources to carry forth *Resilient Chicago*. Charge the Implementation Committee to provide a recommendation, upon assessing various options. Different models include empowering a Chief Resilience Officer tasked with coordination of resilience and equity team leaders embedded in every department, reintroducing a Department of Environment and Sustainability, or establishing a Mayor's Office of Resilience and Racial Equity to oversee implementation (a model adopted by the City of Boston). Ensure continuity and heightened coordination across multiple city departments and agencies involved in executing actions in *Resilient Chicago*.

Timeline

100 Day Actions

- Determine city staffing needs and designate a city point person who will oversee implementation of *Resilient Chicago*.
- Issue an Executive Order requiring relevant City of Chicago departments to commit to *Resilient Chicago* implementation. Announce around Earth Day (4/22) the new mayoral administration's commitment to implement *Resilient Chicago*.
- Expand the Steering Committee to include leaders from environmental justice, urban agriculture, small business, and public health, as well as suburban municipal voices and convene as an "Implementation Committee" charged with prioritizing near-term actions, "flagship initiatives" and drafting implementation work plans in coordination with city staff.

First Year Actions and Goals

- Establish a social media campaign to raise awareness of activities being undertaken and to enhance understanding of Chicago's shocks and stresses.
- Execute a deeper public engagement process to raise awareness, enhance understanding of Chicago's shocks and stresses and gather input and commitments to implement *Resilient Chicago*.
- Advance substantive progress on "flagship" initiatives, estimate implementation costs and determine timeline of milestones.
- Determine allocations of \$70 million from Bloomberg American Cities Climate Challenge and investigate new locally controlled funding sources to support additional resilience-related activities in *Resilient Chicago*.

- Develop a public dashboard to track implementation progress, and release a 1-year Anniversary scorecard celebrating successes.

First Term Goals

- All of the prioritized near-term actions should be fully implemented.
- Examine and secure new city, state and philanthropic funding for implementation, and help partner entities secure funding for implementation.
- Issue updated status report and/or *Resilient Chicago* strategy document (and accompanying implementation work plans) reflecting leadership and direction of new Mayor.

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

The metro Chicago region and the State of Illinois have committed to policies, programs and platforms that require aggressive climate action:

- *Ready for 100* commitment to transition Chicago to 100 percent clean, renewable energy in buildings community-wide by 2035 and complete electrification of the CTA bus fleet by 2040
- *Chicago Climate Charter* committing Chicago (as well as 10 suburban Cook municipalities) to the Paris Agreement (26 to 28 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2025)
- Chicago's commitment to transition all public building electricity use to 100 percent renewable energy sources by 2025
- Chicago is accepted into the Bloomberg American Cities Climate Challenge, a two-year acceleration program that will provide new resources and access to support to accelerate emissions reductions
- CMAP's ON TO 2050 comprehensive regional plan heavily emphasized inclusive growth and resilience in every recommendation
- Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' Greenest Region Compact has been adopted by more than 100 communities
- Governor J.B. Pritzker signed an executive order for Illinois to join the U.S. Climate Alliance, agreeing to advance the goals of the Paris Agreement

Chicago residents, businesses, investors as well as cities across the nation will be looking to the City of Chicago for bold leadership in the work ahead. This is the opportune time for Chicago's next mayor to seize this momentum and demonstrate action that places equity at the forefront by embracing *Resilient Chicago*.

What it will take

Executing *Resilient Chicago* to its fullest will require an emphasis on achieving racial, social and economic equity, as well as bold climate action. This will take a deeper understanding of urban resilience and city leadership on specific actions. Mayoral staff and departments will need to forge partnerships with civic, resident and business stakeholders across the city and surrounding municipalities for successful implementation.

Other considerations

Implementing *Resilient Chicago* calls for coordination, transparency and a commitment to this strategy as well as other comparable commitments and documents. Chicago has access to multiple networks and forums to bolster its capacity, seek technical assistance and learn from peers. Among a few are 100 Resilient Cities, Bloomberg American Cities Climate Challenge, C40, and Chicago Council on Global Affairs annual Chicago Forum on Global Cities.

Planning Chicago's Riverfronts

Prioritize planning, project implementation and stewardship of Chicago's rivers and its riverfront

The city should deepen its support for the riverfront planning vision outlined in *Our Great Rivers*. Chicago is fortunate to have three very different rivers - the Des Plaines, Calumet and the Chicago. All three rivers are located within City of Chicago boundaries and, if treated as an asset, have the potential bring a range of benefits, from recreational to economic to ecological, to Chicagoans. The rivers run through 20 of Chicago's 50 wards, and more than 394,000 people (15 percent of the city's population) live within half a mile of one of the rivers. The *Our Great Rivers* vision, co-created by the Metropolitan Planning Council, Friends of the Chicago River, and the City of Chicago and funded by the Chicago Community Trust, The Joyce Foundation, Arcelor Mittal and other corporate and philanthropic sponsors, outlines goals through 2040 to make the rivers more inviting, productive, and living. This vision represents the desires of more than 6,000 individuals who participated in surveys, town-hall style meetings, and experiential outings to give feedback. Many of the goals in *Our Great Rivers* are underway due to the hard work of various city and regional agencies, civic and community organizations, foundations, and private developers. Continued progress on these goals - including making important riverfront investments beyond downtown - needs support and coordination led by the Mayor and the city government.

Calumet River

The south side has been historically neglected when it comes to focusing on environmental issues related to waterway and land contamination. The Calumet River itself has been excluded from conversations about how to improve Chicago's rivers and riverfront. One example is the recent Executive Order authorized to create a Chicago River Ecology Governance Group, which includes the Little Calumet River but does not directly name other portions of the Calumet River system as an area of focus.

Recommendation: The city should include the Calumet River system (including the Little Calumet River, Grand Calumet River, Calumet River, and Lake Calumet) and adjacent parcels in its conversations about project implementation, stewardship and maintenance. Due to the rich natural assets and industrial history of the region, apparent in sites such as the Forest Preserves' Beaubien Woods, Chicago Housing Authority's Altgeld Gardens neighborhood, and the Illinois International Port District, remediation of

past and current contamination and industrial pollutants should be prioritized.

Recommendation: DPD should create Calumet River Design Guidelines, similar to what was created for the Chicago River, **to ensure new development benefits the community.**

Chicago River Ecology and Governance Group

Projects and actions occurring along Chicago's rivers are not nearly as coordinated as they could and should be to achieve the larger vision described in *Our Great Rivers*. Implementing larger scale planning projects and frameworks – and doing so in an equitable way – will require the active participation and collaboration of multiple agencies and increased decision-making for community groups. It is vital that local stakeholders form the foundation for a regional rivers coordination system. Communities need to have a say in what happens in their neighborhoods and across the city. There are no binding agreements that compel city agencies to work together or include neighborhood stakeholders. The Great Rivers Chicago Implementation Committee – formed in 2016 and coordinated by the Metropolitan Planning Council – has been a good first step toward bringing agencies and stakeholders to the table to collaborate on executing project and planning work. The Executive Order launching the Chicago River Ecology and Governance Group provides a platform on which to develop a more comprehensive coordination body, but it needs to be structured in a way that is equitable and sustainable.

Recommendation: The city should move forward with creating the Chicago River Ecology and Governance Group, but should issue a revision to include the Calumet River. This group should include a combination of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. Participating city and regional agencies should establish memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to ensure that they are required to cooperate with each other to move projects forward collaboratively. This group should be structured to include local implementation advisory committees established to be stewards of the *Our Great Rivers* vision, as well as spokespeople for local concerns. The heads of these committees would be part of the regional rivers coordination system, and each local committee would represent a distinct stretch of the rivers. This body should ultimately streamline coordination for river and riverfront projects. These community stakeholders should represent perspectives concerning economic development, affordable housing, health and environmental justice. Local and community groups included within the composition of the Governance Group should have true decision-making power regarding project selection, project financing, maintenance, and stewardship decisions.

Recommendation: The city should prioritize riverfront improvements that include housing, transportation, equity, remediation, safety, health, economic development and broader environmental concerns. See “Start Racial Equity Framework for Chicago” (this document, p. 35) for more information on how these types of tools can guide decision-making.

Our Great Rivers

Our Great Rivers was a collaborative effort amongst the government, civic stakeholders, and the larger community, that created a shared vision with goals and action steps to guide the beginning of project implementation across the river system. There has been great initial success in gaining momentum and traction on improvements, such as revising the city’s river edge design guidelines and implementing local projects, such as riverfront art and programming, that make a difference in the way that neighborhoods engage with their rivers. Existing and future projects will need the support of the new mayoral administration to continue and grow.

Recommendation: The city should energetically support and engage in projects and planning efforts that have momentum and are aligned with the *Our Great Rivers* vision document. The city should work on a master trail plan, remediate land along the rivers, reduce combined sewer overflow events, coordinate and support local community projects, ensure that new development adheres to the Chicago River Design Guidelines, and participate in Illinois Port District Planning.

Timeline

100 Day Actions

- Declaration stating that the Mayor is supportive of work to enhance the Chicago river system and will continue to support improvement efforts
- Working Group structures and provides organization to the function of the Governance Group
- MOUs and agreements are put in place for agencies and departments to collaborate
- Industrial Corridor Plans involving portions of the Chicago river system, such as the Little Village Industrial Corridor Framework Plan, should include projects and goals aligned with *Our Great Rivers*, such as initiatives to create litter and odor free rivers, improve water quality, and a focus on environmental remediation

First Year Actions and Goals

- Governance Group official meetings begin
- Governance Group is structured to include local stakeholders and government agencies. Group begins coordination of projects that align with principles of *Our Great Rivers* and consider implementation, programming, maintenance, stewardship and remediation needs
- 3 to 5 Initial projects are agreed upon and begin moving to implementation
- City's trail planning gap analysis is used to develop a strategic framework for riverfront trails and secondary connections
- Review financial tools such as the Riverfront Improvement Fund and Open Space Impact Fees for potential revisions to make it easier to fund riverfront improvements
- Champion and actively engage in the master plan for the Illinois International Port District

First Term Goals

- Calumet River Design Guidelines have been completed and approved
- Strategic framework for riverfront trails and secondary connections is 50 percent complete
- Water quality plans are developed for all stretches of the river system
- 3 to 5 projects that have been vetted through the Governance Group have been completed and have accompanying plans for continued support. These projects have broad community support and are equitably located across neighborhood areas.
- All of the goals defined in *Our Great Rivers* for 2020 have been achieved, this includes, but is not limited to, creating new financial tools for project implementation and maintenance, water quality plans for all stretches of the rivers, management of invasive species, remediation of former industrial areas.

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

The past couple of years have shown that there is great interest in rethinking the Chicago waterways. Philanthropic investments, such as those provided by the Chicago Community Trust, are supporting community and civic organization-led projects to improve the rivers. Local neighborhood successes such as the Major Taylor Trail / Whistler Woods Mural and the Ping Tom Park / Chinatown Mural are bringing more attention to the possibilities of riverfront placemaking. Public and private developments such as the additions to the downtown Riverwalk, the new boathouses at Park 571 and Clark Park, and the River Line and South Bank units are raising the bar for recreation, tourism, and residential opportunities along the rivers. Community members are beginning to see the recreational, ecological and economic development potential of the rivers and riverfronts. This is part of growing trend across the country and this new valuation of the River system is occurring in cities like New York, Los Angeles, and other peer cities. *Our Great Rivers* lays out goals at the milestone years of 2020, 2030, and 2040. The first milestone is next year, and we should keep the momentum going so that objectives are achieved through 2040.

What it will take

Will require active leadership from the Office of the Mayor and engaged participation from city departments (DPD, CDOT, Park District) as well as regional agencies (MWRD, Forest Preserves of Cook County), civic organizations, local community groups on the Governance Group

- Will require binding agreements put in place between city departments and regional agencies compelling them to coordinate and collaborate on the Governance Group

- May require reorganization of city departments to provide the staff resources necessary to ensure that Governance Group is properly managed
- Will require deployment of financial tools like Open Space Impact fees, as well as development of new tools to remediate, implement, steward and maintain projects

Alignment with other Initiatives and Priorities of City or Partners

- Need to determine how this would align with the re-creation of a Department of the Environment
- Unclear how this would align with a reorganization of DPD and new emphasis on planning. Ideally, the planning and community engagement functions would be captured in some of the larger neighborhood and comprehensive planning efforts.

Other considerations

- 2020 Milestone: 1 year into first term, great opportunity to celebrate how many 2020 *Our Great Rivers* goals have been achieved and show progress on 2030 and 2040 goals.

A More Affordable Chicago

Increase the city's financial commitment to affordable housing

Corporate funds for affordable housing

Increase much-needed city funds for affordable housing, and begin to chip away at our shortfall of 120,000 affordable units. There are two ways in which we can do so: 1) restore former levels of corporate funds by increasing resources by at least 90 percent. And 2) institute a graduated real estate transfer tax on high value properties.

The City of Chicago spent just about three-tenths of one percent of its budget on affordable housing in 2017, or \$24.5 million out of \$8.3 billion. Tax increment financing revenue — local funds that get spent outside the normal budget process — contributed another \$16.9 million in 2017 toward affordable housing. But even that represented less than three percent of the \$660 million raised by TIF districts.

Rather than spend its own money on affordable housing, Chicago has depended overwhelmingly on resources passed down by the state and federal governments through programs such as public housing and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit. In 2017, [Chicago spent 36 times more of its own money on policing than on affordable housing, and three times more on legal settlements.](#)

While all cities are struggling with a decline in federal support for affordable housing, there is more Chicago can and must do to support this need locally.

Recommendation: The city should restore, or surpass, former levels of corporate fund support for affordable housing. The last time the city had a stand-alone Department of Housing was 2008, at which point it received \$32.3 million in corporate funds according to the Chicago Rehab Network. The new 2019 Department of Housing is budgeted to receive \$4.3 million in corporate funds, an 87 percent reduction. Because the ARO in-lieu fees are a crucial source of funding to Chicago's Low Income Housing Trust Fund, and because the Trust Fund provides vital units at much lower incomes than the ARO, it is critical that the city restore and ultimately exceed former levels of corporate support for affordable housing. An increase to account for inflation would require \$35 million in corporate funds, roughly the same levels as ten years ago.

Graduated Real Estate Transfer Tax

Chicago has a real estate transfer tax of \$5.25 per \$500 of property value. This tax is not graduated, meaning someone who buys or sells a home for \$150,000 pays the same rate as someone who buys or sells a home for \$1.5 million. The current tax generates \$160 million annually, a third of which goes to the Chicago Transit Authority.

In the Metropolitan Planning Council's "[Roadmap to a more equitable future](#)," a document released in May 2018, MPC and the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability recommend a graduated real estate transfer tax to generate desperately needed funds for affordable housing.

Taxable value	Rate structure
<\$500,000	0.35%
\$500,000–\$1m	1%
\$1m–\$5m	2.5%
>\$5m	3.3%

Because the tax is pegged to property values, only the highest-value transactions would cost more. In most cases, the buyer and the seller would pay less than they do now.

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless and other groups have proposed a plan to generate \$150 million a year for affordable housing and services for some 80,000 homeless people. The plan calls for increasing the city's real estate transfer tax on high-value property. An ordinance seeking to put this proposal on the Feb. 26 election ballot, as a referendum question, has been presented by Ald. Walter Burnett.

This is one of many versions of a proposed progressive real estate transfer tax that could get us over the finish line.

Recommendation: The city should establish a graduated real estate transfer tax, and dedicate the new resources it generates to affordable housing and services for the homeless.

Timeline

100 Day Actions

- Establish task force to assess the two funding options and recommend paths forward
- Mayoral announcement of restored or exceeded commitment to local funds for affordable housing and plan for referendum
- Informed by recommendations, meet with Aldermen to craft/revise legislation and referendum language

First Year Actions and Goals

- Advance legislation and referendum
- Advance and pass 2020 Dept. of Housing budget with corporate funds restored to at least 2009 levels.

First Term Goals

- Restore and exceed corporate funds contribution
- Institute graduated real estate transfer tax with additional funds earmarked for affordable housing and services for the homeless

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

For the first time in a decade, the city established a standalone Department of Housing to signal the importance of affordable housing to the city by elevating it to a cabinet level. A new 5-Year Housing Plan, a new department and a new commissioner will accomplish little new, however, without increasing the city's financial contribution to affordable housing.

What it will take

Increased corporate funds simply require a higher allocation to housing in the city's budget. This budget allocation is approved by City Council. For a graduated real estate transfer tax, the City of Chicago would need referendum approval in order to make the proposed changes to the tax structure.

In both cases, an advisory group of affordable housing practitioners and policy advocates should be formed to work with the department in shaping the use of funds.

Alignment with other Initiatives and Priorities of City or Partners

The new Dept. of Housing needs a robust budget to achieve its goals and address the gap of 120,000 needed affordable units.

Other considerations

January 2020 will mark the one-year anniversary of re-establishing the Dept. of Housing. It would be a powerful statement for the Mayor to be able to announce that, one year after its reformation, the city has doubled down on its commitment to affordable housing by increasing its contribution by 87

percent over the previous year, and putting in motion an additional \$150m per year to address homelessness and the shortfall of 120,000 affordable units.

Fair Transit Fares

Reform public transit fares to make them more affordable and improve transit

The city should implement smart fare reforms to make public transit more affordable and accessible. Reducing economic barriers to transit will provide access to more opportunities for economically disconnected people, and will also encourage people to shift modes. Fare reforms would effectively expand the reach of our existing network by integrating separate services and making transit a more cost-effective option. Providing incentives via tax benefits would encourage more people to switch to transit, which is the most efficient, environmentally friendly and equitable form of transportation.

Regionally Integrated Fares

Chicago's three transit providers (CTA, Metra and Pace) are all administered by the Regional Transit Authority. But each has a separate fare structure with limited integration between services. Riders are forced to choose suboptimal transit routes due to price differences and limited options. For example, Metra has over 70 stations in Chicago that provide rapid transit to downtown. Despite serving the same geography as CTA, rides from these stations can cost 2-3 times the 'L' fare. Additionally, there are no discounted transfers between the systems. This failure to integrate the systems disproportionately affects the South Side where Metra could fill a real gap in rapid rail service.

Recommendation: Fully integrate the CTA, Metra and Pace fare systems to all use the same fare medium (most likely the Ventra card), and so that services serving similar areas are priced similarly. Also, **create reduced fare transfers** between systems. By making these services more affordable and convenient, the city can effectively expand the reach of existing transit services without adding any capacity.

Commuter Benefits

The IRS offers tax-free benefits to assist employees with their commuting costs – it allows employees to pay for their transit costs with pre-tax dollars that have been set aside (up to \$255 a month). Because these dollars aren't subject to federal income tax, participants can save as much as 40 percent. Unfortunately, only a relatively small number of employers offer this benefit in Chicago. Other cities around the country – such as [New York](#), [San Francisco](#) and [Washington D.C.](#) – have required that all employers over a certain size (usually 20 employees) offer this low-cost benefit.

Recommendation: The city should fully support [HB2533](#), which would require all employers over 20 people to offer pre-tax transit commuter benefits to their employees. If HB2533 fails, the city should **implement a local ordinance** requiring all employers with at least 20 employees in Chicago to provide access to the IRS's pre-tax transit commuter benefits program.

Affordability

Low-income households spend a higher percent of their earnings on transportation. Lowering the financial burden of transportation drastically improves a person's mobility, increasing access to employment, education, healthcare, and more.

The CTA offers discounted rides for children, students, the elderly and people with disabilities. However, there are no means-tested reduced fare programs for anybody outside of these groups. Thirty-one percent of CTA riders are from households earning less than \$40,000 per year, and 10-15 percent come from households below the federal poverty line.

Recommendation: In collaboration with the CTA, **the city should study and then implement a means-tested fare program in Chicago.** Depending on how the program is structured, it could require state approval.

Timeline

100 Day Actions

- Announce a commitment to developing more equitable fares and more integrated transit service.
- Create task forces to study fare integration and means-tested fares.
- Actively support HB2533 in Springfield

First Year Actions and Goals

- Determine the best course of action for means-tested fares and begin legislative action at the appropriate level
- Begin a fare integration pilot program between CTA and Metra along the Metra Electric District, which would price Metra service along this route closer to CTA 'L' fares, and allow for discounted transfers between CTA buses and Metra
- If HB2533 fails, work with the City Council to introduce a local ordinance that would require employers of a certain size to provide pre-tax benefits

First Term Goals

- Working with the RTA, fully integrate the fare systems of CTA, Pace and Metra

- Implement a means-tested fare program for low-income Chicagoans
- Pass legislation at the state or local level requiring employers in Chicago to provide pre-tax commuter benefits

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

The post-recession success of the Loop is a story that should be celebrated, but we must also recognize that the recovery has not been universal. With income inequality and racial segregation on the rise, now is the time to address the role transportation plays in connecting people in different parts of the city to employment and educational opportunities.

What it will take

- Fare integration will require a great deal of cooperation between the three transit service boards and the RTA. The city can play a role by facilitating these conversations and breaking down institutional and bureaucratic hurdles.
- The city must fully support and lobby on behalf of Rep. Theresa Mah's commuter benefits bill, HB2533. Opposition will likely come from the business community, which views the requirement as a burdensome regulation. If HB2533 fails, the city should investigate the local authority they have to implement a similar requirement.
- For means-tested transit fares, the city should work with the CTA to study the cost and feasibility of different program structures, then pursue the necessary legislative actions (either local or state). If state action is required (such as the amendment of the RTA Act), the city should build support in the legislature.

Alignment with other Initiatives and Priorities of City or Partners

- RTA's [Invest in Transit](#) strategic plan details the need for sustainable revenue to bring our region's transit infrastructure into a state of good repair. Fare integration and means-tested fares will be seen as a revenue cut to transit agencies, so these programs must be developed in a way that doesn't affect their ability to maintain and operate the existing system.
- The City of Chicago's Vision Zero effort seeks to eliminate injuries and fatalities from traffic crashes. Metro areas with higher public transportation use have lower traffic fatality rates.
- The Chicago Department of Health's Healthy Chicago 2.0 identifies active transportation as a key solution for increasing regional health. Objectives include increasing those who bike, walk, and take public transit to work
- Participate in systems change efforts related to Elevated Chicago, a program that targets station area improvements around 7 CTA rail stations.

Equitable Transit Oriented Development

Support equitable development near transit

The city should support development near transit that considers market context, leverages city resources to increase public benefit and considers the needs of local stakeholders. The city's newly amended transit-oriented development (TOD) ordinance added a number of high ridership bus routes. Many of these routes are along critical commercial corridors that have languished from lack of investment and poor infrastructure inadequate to support transit demand. A key component of the ordinance change is the creation of an Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Implementation Plan. This plan calls for the city to develop recommendations for implementing TOD by applying a place-based approach that considers market realities and address such issues as access to affordable housing and commercial spaces, targeted investment in communities of color and appropriate levels of density and parking that meets local needs and fit the neighborhood context. The city should utilize the implementation plan to guide the development of TOD projects and to test innovative models that layer incentives with other programs.

The TOD Ordinance has become a powerful force influencing dense, pedestrian-oriented development throughout Chicago. However, the distribution of development reveals disparities in growth patterns and development attraction between neighborhoods on the North and Northwest Side and neighborhoods on the South and West Side, reinforcing existing racial inequities. In disinvested areas, we have failed to prioritize areas near transit as opportunities to leverage multiple resources for community-driven development. In gentrifying markets, the need for more protections to mitigate residential and small business displacement remains. An equity focused framework is needed to enhance the TOD ordinance so it can be a tool that will work across all Chicago neighborhoods.

Recommendation: Evaluation Framework for eTOD

The eTOD Implementation Plan will recommend performance measures the city will use to evaluate the impacts of the TOD Ordinance on an ongoing basis and establish a requirement for public-facing reporting on the performance measures (e.g. annual report). Performance measures will be developed by the eTOD working group and significant opportunities for public input and feedback should be incorporated into the process.

Recommendation: Strategy and Pilots

The eTOD Implementation Plan will recommend changes to the existing TOD Ordinance and the existing incentive structure. Recommendations will focus on how to increase the amount of affordable housing provided on-site in TOD projects, ensure the right amount of parking with TOD projects, support mixed-use development, and incorporate transportation demand management into the Ordinance.

Recommendations will also suggest uniform standards for determining transit-served areas where the ordinance applies, and strategies to incorporate more flexibility into the accompanying incentives to better respond to different market conditions across Chicago.

Pilot areas will be identified where the recommended changes to the TOD Ordinance can be tested and coordinated with significant community engagement and involvement. Pilot areas should represent a mix of development contexts and be selected based on the ability for strategic stacking of incentives as well and presence of strong local partners to help steward the pilot process.

*Timeline***100 Day Actions**

- Appoint a TOD Coordinator within the Mayor's Office to serve as the primary point of contact regarding the TOD program and coordinate work across all relevant city departments involved in the program.
- Commit to a minimum of two pilot projects where taskforce recommendations can be tested and measured.
- Commit to prioritize time and resources of city departments involved towards the completion of the eTOD implementation plan by July 2020

First Year Actions and Goals

- Finalize eTOD Implementation Plan
- Launch demonstration pilots in different markets
- Socialize eTOD Implementation Plan across city to inform future TOD projects

First Term Goals

- Complete demonstration pilots with process documented and evaluation underway to track immediate and long-term outcomes with an equity framework.
- Revisit TOD Ordinance to determine need for additional changes based on lessons learned from assessment and pilot projects.

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

In January, the City Council approved an amended ordinance which starts the 18 month period for the city to complete the assessment and implementation plan. A cross sector working group that includes the core city agencies, community based organizations and research, transit and policy change experts with a focus on equitable TOD has been working together since November 2018 to support the expansion of incentives as well as pursuing strategies that support equitable outcomes across Chicago neighborhoods.

What it will take

Mayor's Office, DPD, DOH, CTA, CDOT, CDPH, MPC, Elevated Chicago, CNT and leaders working on TOD from impacted communities. Zoning Committee and City Council support is necessary for any additional changes to the ordinance language.

Alignment with other Initiatives and Priorities of City or Partners

- 5 year housing plan
- Alignment with Neighborhood Opportunity Zone and Thrive Zone
- Alignment with city's priorities for new development and disposition of land near the transit served areas
- Recommendations of the Mayor's Transportation & Mobility Task Force
- Resilient Chicago recommendations for neighborhood targeted investment

A Stronger Transportation Infrastructure

Support sustainable state funding for transportation, especially for transit

Since transportation capital is largely funded at the state level, **the city needs to be an advocate for sufficient, sustainable funding in the Illinois General Assembly, especially for transit.** Plain and simple: investing in transit is good for our economy and results in economic growth. Chicago-region studies show that for every dollar invested in transit yields between \$1.21-\$3 in economic returns, and has significant benefits to residents, employers and communities including more jobs, less traffic, higher property values, and improved air quality to name a few.

Currently, 31 percent of the Regional Transportation Authority's transit system is beyond its useful life. We need sufficient, sustainable funding to bring our mature transit system into a state of good repair and to expand our network so transit remains an attractive choice in Chicago.

Recommendation: Be a vocal and active advocate for sustainable transportation funding at the state level and help ensure a minimum of 30 percent of funds is allocated to transit. Illinois also needs a set of policies to help ensure that we are using data and transparent processes to make our investments. Additionally, the Mayor can play a major role in cultivating large and small employers to vocally support new funding for transit.

Timeline

100 Day Actions

- Advocate in Springfield for legislators to advance sustainable funding for multimodal transportation during the 2019 legislative session.

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

Illinois needs to increase sustainable revenue for transportation to stay competitive and to return to economic growth, and we need funding sources that will increase on an annual basis so that the system can be maintained and adapted to changing needs.

- The historic Illinois approach of infrequent bonding programs does not work as a predictable strategy.

- o An infusion of funds once a decade (or less) means that maintenance and planning efforts are highly uneven, resulting in poor transportation outcomes for residents and businesses.
- o Illinois cannot afford to accrue more debt, especially from sources that fail to generate expected revenues. Illinois capital bills have sometimes been tied to revenue from many non-transportation revenue sources. For the 2009 capital bill, the promised funds never fully materialized¹.
- More than 30 states have enacted sustainable transportation revenue approaches since 2012². Illinois is not keeping up with its peers. Every Midwest state has increased sustainable transportation funding in the last few years except Illinois.
- Revenue sources must be indexed to inflation so that they keep up with demands to maintain the system.
- Increased transportation investments should flow from fees charged to users who benefit from the transportation system, such as motor fuel tax increases. The Illinois motor fuel tax has not been increased since 1990 and is not indexed to inflation, resulting in severely reduced purchasing power.

It is critical that any legislation include at least 30 percent of new transportation funding for transit given the importance of transit to the quality of life for Chicago residents, and the strong relationship between transit and the economy (see MPC's [Transit Means Business](#) report). The transit system is in dire need of capital investment to continue to operate reliably and safely.

What it will take

The city needs to influence decision makers at the state level so they develop strong sustainable, multimodal transportation funding legislation. A range of stakeholders need to be involved that support transit, including the business community that relies on transit to access talent, labor groups representing workers, the transportation community and the environmental community.

Alignment with other Initiatives and Priorities of City or Partners

It is critical that the legislation have a high share of funding dedicated to transit because of its paramount role in the economic health of this region and the quality of life of residents:

1 <https://features.propublica.org/the-bad-bet/how-illinois-bet-on-video-gambling-and-lost/>

2 <http://t4america.org/maps-tools/state-transportation-funding/>

- The City of Chicago's Vision Zero effort seeks to eliminate injuries and fatalities from traffic crashes. Metro areas with higher public transportation use have lower traffic fatality rates.
- The Chicago Department of Health's Healthy Chicago 2.0 identifies active transportation as a key solution for increasing regional health. Objectives include increasing those who bike, walk, and take public transit to work

Smart, Equitable Stormwater Management Solutions

Invest in infrastructure to address urban flooding, especially in low-income neighborhoods

The city should create new green infrastructure and invest in existing infrastructure to address urban flooding. Many communities in Chicago, especially those on the South and West Sides, flood repeatedly. A single severe rainstorm in 2013 caused 2,500 “water in basement” and 800 “water on street” complaints, damages to businesses, and flooding at train stations and bus stops across the city. Flooding disproportionately affects minority and low-income neighborhoods: many of the zip codes with the highest amount of damages correspond with census tracts identified as economically disconnected. Additionally, the city’s drinking water source Lake Michigan is increasingly at risk of pollution from sewage and stormwater overflows. Area waterways also suffer from water quality impairments affecting aquatic and riparian habitats.

To address the chronic urban flooding problems facing the City of Chicago and build more resilient communities, the City of Chicago needs to:

Recommendation: Accelerate green infrastructure investments that use natural features and parkland to hold and manage stormwater, particularly in communities in the South and West sides.

Recommendation: Accelerate maintenance of existing green infrastructure and grey infrastructure

Recommendation: Update the city’s Stormwater Ordinance to stricter requirements, with forward-looking precipitation assumptions, while accommodating new options such as **stormwater credit trading or fee in-lieu programs, much like those implemented in Washington, D.C.**

Timeline

First 100 Day Actions

- Convene relevant city departments and agencies to coordinate implementation of the original Green Stormwater Infrastructure Strategy. Conduct preliminary research, detailed modeling and analyses to update the Strategy
- Task relevant city departments to develop a report detailing new infrastructure and ongoing maintenance of the city’s sewers and stormwater systems on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis, comparing known flooding risks, climate projections, etc.
- Commit the city to actions and investments to bring all areas of Chicago to at least a 20-year storm event level of protection.

- Recommit the city to active participation in the Calumet Stormwater Collaborative.

First Year Actions and Goals

- Partner with MPC and The Nature Conservancy on StormStore™ - establishing a stormwater credit trading program for the City of Chicago, including an examination of changes/updates to the City's Stormwater Ordinance.
- Expand the city's Resilient Corridor effort and Space to Grow partnership.
- Set forth a process to develop a City of Chicago Stormwater Master Plan that documents priority areas for grey and green infrastructure installation and/or maintenance to inform future city efforts, as well as those by partners and regional funders.

First Term Goals

- Conduct research and determine next steps in viable options for securing sustainable, dedicated revenue (e.g. stormwater utility fees).
- Enhance maintenance and monitoring of grey and green infrastructure throughout the city, especially focusing on previously underserved neighborhoods, as well as past city investments, such as Space to Grow and Resilient Corridor sites.
- Demonstrate progress implementing the Green Stormwater Infrastructure Strategy 2.0 and City of Chicago Stormwater Master Plan.

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

Much of the city's stormwater infrastructure was built decades ago and is already insufficient for today's rain levels, let alone future storms. Chicago is expected to receive more intense and more frequent storms due to climate change. In the *Resilient Chicago* strategy, storms, severe flooding and infrastructure failure are the top threats to the city's ability to function.

What it will take

Increasing green and grey infrastructure, bolstering maintenance, and innovating new solutions like stormwater credit trading will take heightened funding and transparency, coordination and forward-thinking vision from city staff, in particular the Department of Water Management. Consistent budget allocation is required alongside exploring options for dedicated sustainable revenue for stormwater management. City departments and agencies must also coordinate with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) as well as other surrounding municipalities, and metro Chicago regional planning, water, technology and environmental entities.

Alignment with other Initiatives and Priorities of City or Partners

First created in 2014, the city's Green Stormwater Infrastructure Strategy was developed, but not fully implemented. The *Resilient Chicago* strategy

released in February 2019 to advance urban resilience—including to storms and floods—calls for heightened actions to address stormwater management.

MWRD is a critical partner in the city's stormwater management efforts. MWRD's Watershed Management Ordinance is regularly updated to revise requirements for stormwater controls. Equitable stormwater management is central to the Calumet Stormwater Collaborative, a diverse group of 40 active member agencies facilitated by MPC to heighten coordination around flooding in the City of Chicago's South Side and 50+ suburban Cook County municipalities.

Neighborhood Opportunities by Leveraging Downtown Development

Expand equity and opportunity in communities that have experienced disinvestment

The City of Chicago maintains multiple financial instruments for leveraging investment across the city to benefit communities. Passed in May 2016, the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) ordinance is an innovative tool to leverage investment from high-density areas for commercial corridor and small business improvements in disinvested communities on the South and West sides. In its first 18 months, the fund received \$47.8 million and secured commitments totaling \$203 million. After two rounds, approximately [\\$12M in grants have been awarded to 90](#) small businesses on the South and West sides. The Emanuel administration appropriated [\\$12M for Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus programs in 2019](#).

Created in 2017, the Industrial Corridor Fund allows the City to mitigate the loss of industrial space in parts of industrial areas that are being converted to non-industrial zoning, such as the North Branch Industrial Corridor. These fees are allocated to a fund used to support and expand the city's industrial base in other industrial corridors that are not experiencing rezoning.

Open Space Impact Fees are used for open space acquisition and capital improvements in areas experiencing new residential development. Over the years, these fees have been used to provide valuable park space in growing communities.

All three of these programs have positives, but also some significant limitations. We propose changes to the NOF that allow more locally-owned small businesses and start-ups to access this resource and prioritize broader investments across the South and West sides. We propose changes to the Industrial Corridor Fund that will promote transparency and a framework for how the funds are allocated. For Open Space Impact Fees, we propose revisions that would make the fees portable to adjacent communities as well as able to fund activities beyond acquisition and capital improvements.

Neighborhood Opportunity Funds

Because the Neighborhood Opportunity Funds are paid as reimbursement, many small businesses and start-ups without sufficient cash reserves to front-fund the work miss out on this resource. These are the very entities that struggle to attract traditional capital as well, and which this fund is meant to help.

In addition, the city has issued an RFQ to address two issues that NOF grantees have identified: help with managing the contracting and construction processes, and navigating access to lending and capital. The city's response is to provide Construction Project Managers and Project Lending Coaches to grantees.

Recommendation: Turn the funds into an upfront grant rather than reimbursement to achieve more equitable outcomes.

OR

Recommendation: Make reimbursable grants work better by partnering with CDFIs that can front fund the project at low cost and provide any gap financing that may remain after the use of NOF. The best option here is to pilot the RFQ (Construction Project Managers and Project Lending Coaches) quickly, evaluate the results carefully, prepare upfront capital providers and fully implement both in the next round.

Industrial Corridor Fund

The Industrial Corridor Fund can be used to finance projects and recommendations identified in individual Industrial Corridor Framework Plans. However, overall comprehensive planning for all of the City's 26 industrial has not occurred. This limits the ability to systematically understand the types of projects that should be prioritized for funding.

In addition, it is unclear how funding determinations are made and the ordinance does not specify the type of funding provided, whether it be grants, reimbursements or loans. Based on available City information to date, no approval of expenditures for funding have been approved by City Council.

Recommendation: Create an overall zoning and land use strategy for all 26 of the City's Industrial Corridors that considers manufacturing trends and changing demographics in the areas in which they are located.

Recommendation: Continue developing individual framework plans for each individual corridor, but also indicate how projects should be prioritized and how money should be allocated from the Industrial Corridor Fund in order to pay for improvements.

Recommendation: Define parameters around how funds will be distributed and in what form (grants, loans, reimbursements), and then finance projects based on the prioritization process. Make this information publically available.

Open Space Impact Fees

Open Space Impact Fees, as they currently work, are unable to be leveraged for development of open space in any community except for the area in which they originate. In addition, the money can only be used for acquisition and capital improvements. These factors severely limit the type of impact these fees can have on increasing equity in open space creation, programming and stewardship across the City. Tying these fees strictly to residential development and rehabilitation negatively impacts open space in underinvested communities.

Recommendation: Open Space Impact Fee funds should be allocated based on a system that prioritizes community needs for open space, rather than origination of the development fees.

Recommendation: Allowable uses for fees should expand beyond acquisition and capital improvements. There is a legacy of land and water contamination in communities with a history of environmental justice issues that could benefit from a tool to help fund remediation. Additionally, these funds should be used to fund maintenance and programming of open spaces in areas around the City that lack the resources for adequate stewardship.

Timeline

100 Day Actions

- Meet with CDFIs to assess ability to front fund grantees
- Scope out process for creating a comprehensive plan for the industrial corridor system
- Clarify the type of funding provided for project implementation (whether it's grants, loans, or reimbursable)
- Review the open space impact fee ordinance to determine what the next steps are for potential changes

First Year Actions and Goals:

- Construction project managers, project lending coaches, and CDFIs to front fund grants are all thriving and flourishing
- Comprehensive plan for industrial corridors complete. Individual plans are underway and projects prioritized under plans receive funding
- Revise and pass ordinance that allows Open Space Impact Fees to fund additional projects beyond acquisition and capital improvements

First Term Goals:

- Evaluate financial programs to ensure that they are achieving the goals they were designed for

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

The City is currently undergoing a review of its 26 industrial corridors and is also in the process of creating a River Ecology and Governance Group to allocate open space impact fees to fund riverfront projects. This moment provides an opportunity to rethink how investment tools can be used to fund and prioritize projects in communities where they are needed most and broaden the type of projects that could be funded.

What it will take

Changes suggested for the NOF do not require an ordinance change, simply a change in practice and partners. Partners include: City of Chicago Dept. of Planning and Development, SomerCorp and CDFIs. Also likely needed: loan loss reserve due to assuming the risk of front-funding.

Recommendations for the Industrial Corridor Fund will require coordination between City departments and agencies regarding how projects should be prioritized and who will take the lead on project implementation.

Open Space Impact Fee changes will require revisions to the ordinance to expand the number of uses as well as where the fees can be used geographically.

Other Considerations

This effort is aligned with the ongoing industrial corridor framework planning led by DPD and the River Ecology & Governance Group led by DPD.

Comprehensive Planning at the Department of Planning and Development

Create a citywide and transparent process that is comprehensive and community-driven.

Chicago needs inclusive, comprehensive planning efforts across the city. The following recommendations are designed to improve the structure and capacity of DPD so that there is a focus on comprehensive planning, community engagement, and project implementation in neighborhoods across the city. This will require centralizing some of the current functions that Aldermen are actively engaged in, like zoning, as well as reorganizing the department and providing additional staff resources.

Note: Many of these ideas are aligned with and adapted from the Shriver Center's report "[A City Fragmented](#)."

Comprehensive Plan for Chicago

The City does not have a comprehensive plan or clearly articulated citywide goals centered on the crucial issues of population loss, health, housing affordability and development grounded in racial equity. Land use planning is currently done on a reactive basis when potential projects arise. This leads to fragmented efforts that do not align critical areas like housing, transportation and open space and are not fulfilling a larger strategic framework or vision for the city as a whole. This is also partially exacerbated by 50 aldermen making their own zoning decisions, which can prevent the City from executing on larger citywide goals such as the equitable distribution of affordable housing.

Recommendation: The City should create a comprehensive plan for Chicago. Together with community and stakeholder input, the City should develop a clear vision for the type of place they want Chicago to be, in the form of a comprehensive plan—which the City has not had since the 1960s. This vision should be created through the use of a racial equity framework (see "Start Racial Equity Framework for Chicago" in this document, p. 35), supported by goals and metrics that allow the City to track achievements, progress, and alignment of subsequent plans. This vision should build upon existing neighborhood plans and shape the adoption of future neighborhood plans that align with the larger citywide comprehensive plan. This plan would guide community development and land-use decisions related to residential, commercial, transportation, parks and open space. These planning

efforts would consider phasing of projects as well as financing needs and opportunities.

Recommendation: Decisions for zoning should be guided by a limited set of criteria that is consistent with the City’s overall comprehensive plan and neighborhood plans. In order to make progress on citywide goals and advance a comprehensive plan, zoning changes must be decided based on adherence to the goals and plan rather than the loudest voices or the biggest campaign contribution. Other City Commissions including the Plan Commission and Community Development Commission should evaluate projects using the same set of criteria and standards. Also consider centralizing mundane zoning decisions to be more in line with the way that comparable cities currently operate, such as New York and Los Angeles.

Recommendation: Development tools should comply with a racial equity framework, be used to achieve comprehensive plan goals, and should be deployed to fit the project type (e.g. TIF should be used to improve truly blighted areas). Development tools include: Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF), Industrial Corridor Funds, Open Space Impact Fees, incentives for Transit Oriented Development, etc. A thorough review of how these tools are currently being used should be conducted simultaneously with research into new financial instruments to spur investments in struggling neighborhoods.

Community Engagement

Community engagement around planning frameworks is not an integral part of the current way that City agencies function. It is inconsistent across and within departments. Each project has a different timeline and process. Some may consist of multiple community meetings, some may have none. Some may have a number of community partners involved, some may have one or none. Most agencies/departments do not have many staff dedicated to this role, which severely limits the amount of outreach that can occur for each project.

Recommendation: Develop a comprehensive strategy for public engagement to build trust between the city government and our residents. The city needs an inclusive vision for public engagement that should be embraced institutionally and executed by each agency. Community engagement processes should have more consistency across agencies and projects, and operate within the core values of effective public engagement practice including two-way communication, collective learning and trust-building.

This commitment should be publicized on the City's website, identifying key pillars of the process to make it easy for the public to understand the opportunities for input, the timeline for decision-making and the how agencies involved will communicate with constituents throughout the life of a project. It is reasonable that certain projects may require more or different meetings or outreach than others given their scale. This can still be accomplished within a consistent system that defines the process based in part on project size and other criteria. The City should develop metrics and baseline accountability for what counts as successful community engagement. These could be both qualitative and quantitative measures that consider the range of community group perspectives represented, the number of participants at meetings, the number of public comments received, etc. These should be created for each type of standard engagement process defined, so that it clear when a process has not been as inclusive or as well attended as other engagements.

Recommendation: Invest in public engagement resources and tools. In order to have better community engagement the City must invest in public engagement resources. This includes **increasing the number of staff charged with community engagement across all agencies of the City, and coordination of those staff and their efforts** should be housed within a new Mayor's Office of Community Engagement. Staff within this Office would support and coordinate the efforts across different agencies, including DPD, CDOT and Housing, to conduct inclusive community engagement activities across the city. Further investment in development of new and existing staff through industry recognized training, cultural competency and equity and inclusion training will help professionalize the practice of public engagement and bring the city up to date with best practices across the country.

Timeline

100 Day Actions

- Identify additional staffing and budgetary allocations
- Determine the number of neighborhoods that have completed and current plans
- Identify process and scope needed for creating a comprehensive plan including costs and timeline. This could require a taskforce.

First Year Actions and Goals:

- Develop a vision for Chicago including the strategic goals to be accomplished, and the factors that will drive a comprehensive plan
- Funds are raised to complete the comprehensive plan and engagement strategies have begun

First Term Goals:

- Complete comprehensive plan
- New and existing fiscal tools aligned to project type
- Begin implementation of neighborhood-level projects aligned with adopted plan

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

A new mayoral administration presents the opportunity to evaluate how planning is valued within the city. Planning and making coordinated investments and improvements have been the backbone of successful city revitalizations. Without a comprehensive plan or planning philosophy, we will continue to make reactive, one-off development decisions rather than ensuring and seeking new investments that advance the citywide plan. As long as we defer to 50 elected officials to set 50 different policy goals – or none at all – we will continue to experience profound black population loss and deepening inequities across communities. Chicago deserves a vision that values the input of its community members, as well as considers the individual assets of neighborhoods.

What it will take

- Additional staff and budgetary resources provided to DPD for: increase in community engagement staff, reallocation/increase in staff to focus on comprehensive planning efforts, department liaisons
- Change in departmental practice to focus on collaboration (DPD, CDOT, Park District, Housing, etc.)
- Zoning decisions guided by a limited set of criteria consistent with City's comprehensive plan

Other considerations

- Align with conversations regarding financial tools, such as TIF, for neighborhood investments
- Align with current DPD planning efforts that are ongoing, such as Industrial Corridor Framework Plans
- Revisit Chicago Neighborhoods Now and recent neighborhood level planning efforts to understand how they fit into an overall comprehensive plan
- Aligned with Resilient Chicago goals to repair trust and cohesion between government and residents

Tackling Water Supply Issues

Protect Chicagoans, capitalize on our water wealth, and address significant inequities

We need to remediate our pervasive lead pipes and adopt rates, policies and programs for water service that protect all Chicagoans.

The City of Chicago has a significant freshwater advantage over many of its national and international counterparts. Yet we risk not capitalizing on this resource due to critical water infrastructure and service issues: lead in drinking water and water affordability. These two critical issues also underscore systemic inequities in our city—thus taking action on our water issues will also improve quality of life and trust in government.

Lead in Drinking Water

There is no safe level of lead exposure. Exposure can cause behavior problems and learning disabilities in young children who are most susceptible to the effects of lead poisoning, which can lead to decreased IQ, hyperactivity, hearing problems, stunted growth, and learning disabilities. In adults, lead exposure can increase the risk of heart attack, high blood pressure, kidney failure, and reproductive problems for both men and women. Recent [water testing results](#) within the City of Chicago have raised significant public concern, particularly because *Chicago has more lead service lines than any other city and actually required them by law until 1986*, when U.S. Congress finally banned the use of this toxic material in service lines and other plumbing. However, remediation of this toxic material was not required, so lead pipes, fixtures and solder will remain a public health concern so long as this legacy material remains in use.

To address this critical public health issue and demonstrate national leadership in 21st Century water management, the City of Chicago must:

Recommendation: Inventory its legacy lead service line infrastructure to understand the scale of the problem

Recommendation: Create and implement a lead service line replacement plan and program

Recommendation: Proactively **structure the program to account for disparities** in ability to pay, solutions for rental and affordable housing tenants, language barriers, and more. Additionally, the City should support State of Illinois revenue and funding solutions for this immense lead challenge.

The Mayor's Office will not have to bear the cost and administration of these solutions alone: the State of Illinois is considering measures to survey lead pipes and equitably fund their removal. Senator Steans has introduced SB1532, which tasks the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to create a low-income lead pipe removal program. Representative D'Amico has proposed HB2128, which would create a tax credit for homeowners who replace lead service lines. Finally, the capital bill may include money for lead pipe replacement.

Water Service Affordability + Shutoffs

According to a recent [American Public Media story](#), the cost of water for an average family of four in Chicago nearly tripled between 2007 and 2018—from \$178 per year to \$576. While rates in Chicago have gone up for often justified reasons—such as replacing century old pipes and water service infrastructure—our existing water rates are regressive in nature, and have impacted lower-income residents the most. [American Public media also reported](#) that water service shut-offs have disproportionately high concentrations in lower-income and majority black and Latino neighborhoods. The city's policies on shut-offs are draconian and lack transparency, flexibility or protection for our residents. As water rates continue to increase in order to repair and replace our old, crumbling infrastructure (including lead pipes), policies and programs that support all Chicagoans must be enacted.

To address this growing equity issue, Chicago should:

Recommendation: Undertake a **study to determine a fairer water rate structure** that alleviates regressivity.

Recommendation: **Rework the city's current water shut-off policies** and available affordability programs

Timeline

First 100 Day Actions

- Lead
 - o By way of executive order or legislative action by City Council, create a lead service line remediation plan and program that includes producing an inventory, providing robust public education and implementing a variety of funding/financing strategies.
 - o Establish an Advisory Group to help guide the vision, direction and development of a citywide lead service line remediation plan

and program that includes community groups, water industry professionals, public health experts, and civic organizations.

- Affordability
 - o Issue an executive order to undertake a study to determine a better rate setting approach that helps alleviate regressive issues related to paying for water service. This study should include exploring tiered water rates by usage, as well as water rates based-on income.
 - o Establish an Advisory Group that includes community groups, water industry professionals, public health experts, and civic organizations to help guide the above study on improved, equitable approaches to water rate setting.

First Year Actions and Goals

- Lead
 - o Prioritize coordination across city departments (including DWM, DPD, DPH and Department of Finance) to identify areas of particular risk to lead exposure e.g., older housing stock; low-income neighborhoods; homes with young children and elderly, etc.
 - o Examine ways to reduce the cost of a lead service line replacement such as waiving city permitting fees and bundling contracting for this type of construction, implementing non-regressive revenue streams, and utilizing the State Revolving Fund (SRF) to help fund lead service line replacement.
 - o Adopt a more transparent approach to addressing the concerns of citizens and providing helpful educational materials and discounted (or free) water filters.
- Affordability
 - o Complete the water rate study and announce next steps for rolling out a new water rate setting approach.
 - o Prioritize coordination across city departments (including DWM, DPH and Department of Finance) to identify improved programs and policies to avoid water service shut-off that work in true partnership with customers rather than against them.

First Term Goals

- Lead
 - o Achieve rollout of, and measurable progress on the City of Chicago's lead service line remediation plan and program.
- Affordability
 - o Implement new water rate approach that is no longer regressive.

- o Implement new water shut-off policies and available affordability programs in order to avoid expensive service termination (which is costly for both the customer and the city), and support residents in a more humane and transparent approach.

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

The risk to our health and the financial well-being of our most vulnerable citizens is too high. Federal- and State-level policies and regulations are being created and enacted right now to address lead. The horror stories of our community members experiencing water shutoffs with high fees to have service restored is not acceptable. Chicago has the opportunity to be a place where our safe water wealth is enjoyed by all. In order to stay ahead of the curve and rebuild a bridge of trust that has been broken with its residents, the City of Chicago must demonstrate action now.

What it will take

In order to move forward, the City of Chicago will need proactively identify, discuss and provide transparency on the nature and scale of both of these problems. The city will need to roll out a lead service line remediation plan/program that considers 1) where risks are greatest, 2) how to remove barriers e.g., permitting processes, 3) how to pay: shared approaches, fee waivers, new, non-regressive revenue streams, grant programs for those most in need and at risk, etc. To address water affordability, the City of Chicago will need to take a transparent look at what the full system costs are before setting a new water rate structure that 1) ensures safe drinking water service, and 2) supports equity so that those with the least are not overly burdened by regressive rate setting practices.

Alignment with other Initiatives and Priorities of City or Partners

The City of Chicago should actively participate in and support the efforts currently being created and enacted at the federal- and state-level to address lead in drinking water. Additionally, there are a number of civic organizations, community groups as well as industry experts available to assist and partner with in developing a lead service line plan and program.

MPC, in partnership with Elevate Energy and the Illinois Indiana Sea Grant, will be releasing new findings that further underscore the affordability issue and identify solutions to protect residents.

Racial Equity Framework for Chicago

Commit to racial equity in Chicago

The only way our region and its residents will reach their full potential is by dismantling the barriers that create disparities and inequities by race and income. It is essential for our growth and our shared prosperity. The government sector has a constitutional obligation—and statutory powers—to end the segregation of people, power and resources, and demand it of others as well. This means a commitment to not only creating new mechanisms to address disparities, but to changing the institutional systems that perpetuate them through ongoing staff training, equity assessments of any proposed initiatives and investments, and public accountability to progress on goals.

The legacy of individual and systemic racism in metropolitan Chicago continues to have devastating impacts. Black and brown communities are disproportionately harmed by lack of opportunity, exclusionary development and unjust policies. Private and public policies and programs built our divides and therefore bear a responsibility to correct the course. Research has shown that prioritizing equity and inclusion yield greater economic and social benefits for all.

Recommendation: Build knowledge and capacity agency by agency, department by department

All staff—from teachers to police officers to judges to medical personnel—receive implicit bias and individual/systemic racism awareness training and it is also a required component of new staff orientation. The Chicago Department of Public Health has been successful in providing baseline training on understanding structural racism to their staff and partner agencies. CDPH has also invested in dedicated staff through their 2019 budget that will focus on operationalizing equity to advance the work of the health department.

Trained staff should be able to self-select to be part of each agency's or department's "Change Team." These groups receive initial and ongoing training, help develop department level strategies to address issues of equity within the context of their work and lead in-department use of racial equity tools. Attention is paid to Change Teams reflecting a range of positions, race, gender, etc. to ensure the work is embraced throughout the organization. The Cook County Forest Preserve District has established the REDI committee to review the priorities of the department and begin to examine them through a racial equity framework. Four other county agencies have staff who are being

trained in racial equity concepts and application of tools as part of the Chicago United for Equity Fellowship.

Recommendation: Use racial equity assessment in decision making

Racial equity assessment tools can be employed immediately to analyze disparate impacts by race and plan accordingly on the front end, such as in proposed budgets, ordinances or other policy changes and in practices such as hiring and contracting. Measurable indicators of success/impact over time can be created for accountability. The City of Seattle and King County, Washington have pioneered the use of racial equity impact assessment (REIA) tools in government to augment decision-making and mitigate harm caused by unintentional bias and structural racism. The City of Seattle's commitment to equity was formalized by a resolution passed in 2009 that directs all city departments to available tools to assist in the elimination of racial and social disparities across key indicators of success.

Other cities in the United States have already begun to implement policies like those recommended above: Seattle, New York City, New Orleans and Philadelphia all have in place racial equity frameworks from which Chicago can emulate and learn.

Timeline

100 Day Actions

- Meet with CDPH and Cook County to learn about their work training staff, use of equity tools and partnership with the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE)
- Form a taskforce to study best practices by other cities working to implement an equity framework and draft an ordinance for the city's commitment to eliminate racial and social disparities through the use of equity tools and mandatory training of all city employees.

First Year Actions and Goals

- Pass a "Chicago Equity & Social Justice Ordinance"

First Term Goals

- All city employees trained in implicit bias and understanding structural racism starting with elected officials
- Establish an Office of Equity and Social Justice and Chief Equity Officer that reports to the Mayor.

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

In the last few years there is a heightened conversation around issues of race and equity. Nonprofits, philanthropy, corporations and government agencies have embarked on honest assessments of their position in maintaining systems that hold inequities in place. In Chicago, disproportionate fines and fees in communities of color, black population loss and police/community distrust are all signs of the need to embrace a racial equity framework. A new mayor who advances equity is the right leader to bring this change to city government at a time when equity is at the center of public discourse.

What it will take

Addressing racial inequities will require the cooperation of the Mayor, City Council, City Commissioners and agency heads. Partnership with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity will also be essential. MPC can help with approaching philanthropy to provide the financial supports needed for this partnership and staff trainings.

Alignment with other Initiatives and Priorities of City or Partners

- Resilient Chicago – names racism as a top stressor
- Equitable TOD Implementation Plan
- Healthy Chicago 2.0

Going It Alone in the Region

Act regionally to improve outcomes for Chicago

The city needs to think and act more like the regional partner it is.

Chicago's pursuit of increased transit funding, better transit performance, sustainable water management and other critical issues suffer from Chicago's reluctance to partner with other regional actors. By reengaging in collaborative efforts locally and regionally – such as the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus – Chicago stands to benefit.

Regional Re-engagement

Chicago has withdrawn from meaningful, collaborative engagement with neighboring suburbs, but also with likeminded cities throughout the Great Lakes. Despite being a founding member of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, Chicago has disengaged in recent years, with harmful results in Springfield, Washington D.C., and at home.

Recommendation: The City of Chicago, and the Mayor specifically, should immediately reengage with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and work toward collaborative solutions on workforce, housing, traditional and reverse commuting, regional economic development, the Greenest Region Compact and more. Additionally, the city and Mayor should reengage the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to advocate for and implement solutions on lead in drinking water systems, climate change, invasive species and protection of the planet's greatest reserve of available fresh drinking water.

Water Rates

Chicago sells drinking water to dozens of suburbs, and its recent rate increases – done with no consultation or even courtesy outreach – have fractured regional trust. While the rate increases were warranted, the approach was not. Now many suburbs are actively pursuing alternative water supplies, which will result in reduced revenue for Chicago, as well as reduced efficiency of Chicago's water infrastructure.

Recommendation: The Mayor and the Dept. of Water Management should meet with the Mayor of every suburban water customer to restore trust, but also to negotiate and secure long-term contracts that will guarantee Chicago continued revenue, but also provide suburban communities

with certainty about rates so they can make their own water management decisions.

Transit

Chicago has long sought increased revenue for the CTA, but has not participated in regional transit funding efforts or integrated transit planning including Metra and Pace. This ignores the fact that not only do hundreds of thousands of people use Metra and Pace every day to commute to and from Chicago, but that Chicagoans use more than 60 Metra stations within the city, and that Pace provides paratransit services to many Chicago residents. Regional transit and transportation planning also suffers from the same isolationist approach.

Recommendation: The city should actively work with the RTA, Metra, Pace, CTA, Cook County and CMAP in a regional partnership to secure additional revenue for transit, and to plan for a more integrated and equitable transit system. The city should support efforts in Springfield and Washington D.C. to secure funds for all of the region's transit service providers, not just the CTA.

Climate Change

In the wake of the Trump Administration abandoning the Paris Climate Agreement, Chicago convened the North American Climate Summit in December 2017 to establish the Chicago Climate Charter. More than 70 cities in the U.S., Canada and Mexico signed on, as did the City of Chicago and 10 other Cook County municipalities. Since the signing of the charter, Chicago has not engaged with those suburbs, many of which are looking to the city for direction, and it is unclear the extent to which Chicago has fulfilled the commitments of that charter at all.

Recommendation: The city should issue a Year 3 report on its implementation of the Chicago Climate Charter and outstanding work ahead, and convene a regional forum with its 10 neighboring co-signatories, the Mayors Caucus and other regional actors to share best practices and determine regional coordination to scale up climate change mitigation and adaptation actions.

Timeline

100 Day Actions

- Coordinate with the RTA and transit service providers on a joint funding approach to advance in Springfield and Washington, DC.

- Meet with leadership of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, respectively, to develop joint action and rapport.
- Charge the Dept. of Water Management and Dept. of Finance with developing options for long-term water sale contracts.

First Year Actions and Goals

- Begin reengagement with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus by hosting a regional Mayors forum in Chicago, and attend one in the suburbs.
- Begin reengagement with the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative by hosting a Great Lakes Mayors forum in Chicago, and attend one in the suburbs.
- Begin discussions with suburban water customers on long-term contracts with dependable rates.
- Partner with RTA and transit service providers on a study to determine self-derived revenues that do not require State or Federal action.

First Term Goals

- Increase transit funding through regional partnership.
- Hold the 2nd North American Climate Summit, and develop implementation actions and metrics in partnership with suburban co-signatories.
- Secure long-term, sustainable water system revenues through mutually beneficial sale contracts.

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

A change in leadership allow for a reset in local and regional relationships, and the condition of Chicago's transit system, water management, and budget necessitate that those relationships be mended.

What it will take

Fundamentally, these recommendations require only a mindset and tone change from City Hall. But intergovernmental relationships require multiple touch points – not only will the Mayor need to engage in regular dialogue with suburban Mayors, but Commissioners and staff at multiple departments will need to be similarly inclined.

Alignment with other Initiatives and Priorities of City or Partners

A more regionally engaged City of Chicago can only help spur progress on the Chicago Climate Charter, Great Rivers Chicago, ON TO 2050, the Greenest Region Compact, and commitments made through partnerships such as C40 and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Other considerations

Chicago's collaboration across the state line with communities in Indiana is equally poor, despite the fact that for many thousands of Chicago residents the employment, recreation and shopping amenities in Whiting, Hammond, and East Chicago are closer and more easily accessed than those elsewhere in Chicago.

Unfettered Aldermanic Prerogative

Establish limits to – not eliminate – aldermanic prerogative when it comes to affordable housing

Direct aldermanic power toward the community good, not against it.

Unfettered aldermanic prerogative — the custom in Chicago’s City Council to allow each alderman to direct zoning and permit decisions within his or her ward —perpetuates segregation, creates disparities in how we invest in communities and invites political corruption.

As a result of this abuse, over the past year Chicago has experienced a federal complaint and lawsuit against the city, proposed legislation to curb its excesses, and an FBI investigation into two longstanding aldermen. The city needs systemic changes to upend this system, but first, note that these changes only work in the context of a full-scale revamp of how zoning, planning and community investment functions for the good of the entire city. See “Start Comprehensive Planning at the Department of Planning and Development” (this document, p. 27) for more detail on this needed transformation to how the city of Chicago plans.

Second, as MPC noted in a [Chicago Tribune op-ed](#) co-written with Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law and Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, the antidote to too much power is not zero power. Aldermanic prerogative doesn’t need to be eliminated but does need common-sense limitations. Community residents and their elected officials should have a say in shaping their neighborhoods, but when it comes to affordable housing, community input should be in the form of *how*, not *if*.

Reform Ward Level Zoning

Ward level control over zoning is the opposite of best practice. A 2016 study found that the greater the level of involvement by local government and residents in development approval, the greater the segregation, concluding that “land use decisions cannot be concentrated in the hands of local actors” (Lens and Monkkonen, Yang and Jargowsky, 2006).

Recommendation: Revise the zoning ordinance to prohibit unrestricted ward level control over zoning. With a citywide comprehensive plan and commitment to racial equity, each zoning decision will be evaluated as to whether it is in accordance with the plan and advances racial equity. Small matters such as signage permits should be centralized.

Transparent, Accountable Process for Affordable Housing

Under the current system, aldermen can block affordable housing for any reason or no reason whatsoever. The development approval process needs transparency and accountability, and needs to adhere to citywide goals and policy for the equitable distribution of affordable housing.

Recommendation: Create consistent guidelines for the development approval process that establish time limits by which a proposal must advance. The [Affordable Housing Equity Ordinance](#), introduced by Ald. Ameya Pawar (47) in July 2018 with 27 sponsors, provides a roadmap upon which to build:

- The Affordable Housing Equity Ordinance would apply to any project with affordable residential units in a planned development or zoning change that triggers the ARO that is proposed in a ward where less than 10 percent of its occupied rental housing is affordable to persons at 60 percent AMI or below ([see map](#) of which wards have more and which less than 10 percent affordability)
- When such a development is proposed, the Plan Commission or City Council must take action on the application within 90 days or it is automatically deemed approved
- If rejected, it is referred to the Chicago Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). The ZBA will review the development application with fact-based criteria. The ZBA is the final decision maker, and they must document, in writing, the reasons for its decision

Eliminate Aldermanic Approval for Financing

Before a development even gets to the point of being indefinitely delayed, many never make it past “Go” because of required aldermanic letters of support to be considered for city financing (a policy the Illinois Housing Development Authority eliminated at the state level in 2012).

Recommendation: As outlined in the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law’s report, [A City Fragmented](#), “Remove the evidence of aldermanic/community support and letter of aldermanic support requirement from the Multi-Family Loan Program, Qualified Allocation Plan, and any internal city procedures related to the review of affordable housing applications for public financing. **Rather than obligate developers to secure aldermanic support, the city could require applicants to certify that their proposed request for financing is consistent with the city’s comprehensive plan.** If an alderman opposes a project, they could submit comments based upon a set of specific and limited reasons. Such reasons might include the proposed project perpetuating segregation or being located in a flood plain. In this manner, local officials would be required to make public the reasons for their opposition and those reasons must be factual and clearly related to rational interests in the “sticks and bricks” of the project, and not the demographics of the residents of the

proposed project. Moreover, the opposition must be consistent with treatment of non-affordable housing plans. **Any selective opposition by an alderman would not be considered legitimate."**

Finally, financing decisions with public funds **should be guided by a transparent, accountable Qualified Allocation Plan** that proactively spells out the city's priorities consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Timeline

100 Day Actions

- Form a task force to issue recommendations for the most comprehensive and actionable path forward.

First Year Actions and Goals:

Guided by the task force recommendations, introduce and pass legislation that

- Revises the zoning ordinance to prohibit unrestricted ward level control over zoning;
- Creates consistent guidelines for the development approval process that establish time limits by which a proposal must advance; and
- Removes the aldermanic/community support and letter of aldermanic support requirement related to the review of affordable housing applications for public financing.

First Term Goals

- Evaluate affordable housing development - in process and completed - in all wards, to measure progress toward a more equitable distribution of affordable housing.

Additional Considerations

Why the time is right

If the past year's federal complaint and lawsuit against the city and proposed legislation to curb the excesses of aldermanic prerogative were not enough, the degree of abuse detailed in FBI investigations into two longstanding aldermen must be. Allegations of attempting to trade Viagra, masseuse parlor visits and private property tax appeal business in exchange for zoning changes have made painfully clear that unfettered aldermanic prerogative is not only a poor substitute for citywide plans and goals and perpetuates segregation, but also breeds corruption.

A city that has long looked the other way in the face of these abuses is beginning to demand accountability and change. In a sharp break from any

previous mayoral elections, in this cycle candidates are being asked repeatedly about and being judged by their stance on aldermanic prerogative. The current administration has acknowledged the need for a “floodlight of transparency” in the zoning process and suggested time limits on developments advancing to avoid the tactic of indefinite delay.

It is not every day that an FBI investigation involves one alderman wearing a wire on another and causes both to lose their powerful chairmanships of committees. If we will ever have the justification and political will to create citywide prioritization of affordable housing, it is now.

What it will take

- While the way that aldermanic prerogative functions is unwritten, legislative action by City Council is required to put the necessary parameters in place.
- As noted in “Start Comprehensive Planning at the Department of Planning and Development” (this document, p. 27), we need simultaneous legislation to centralize more zoning decisions, thus bringing Chicago in line with other cities such as New York and Los Angeles, as well as a citywide comprehensive plan rooted in racial equity.
- The new mayor should form a task force to recommend the appropriate legislation and best path forward. Likely members include City Council members active on these issues, policy and community development/community organizing leaders, data experts and land use/affordable housing attorneys.

Alignment with other Initiatives and Priorities of City or Partners

Two strong partners are the Shriver Center and Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance

KeepBuildStart**Stop**

Racially Inequitable Fines, Fees, and Ticketing

Stop excessive traffic fines and fees

Stop excessive traffic fines and fees that disproportionately penalize poor and working class people of color. The City of Chicago must stop penalizing low-income drivers through inequitable fees by eliminating the suspension of driver's licenses for unpaid parking tickets. The city should also assess the current fee structure and adopt an income-based sliding scale fee schedule so low-income people are not crippled by fees they will never be able to pay off.

Excessive court fines, traffic tickets and compounding fees that people simply cannot afford to pay regularly lead to lost opportunities, whether through lost jobs or housing, suspension of driver's licenses and even incarceration. A recent investigation by [ProPublica](#) found that debt from traffic tickets alone disproportionately burden African Americans in Chicago, leading to crippling debt that most often results in bankruptcy.

Recommendation: The city should reassess current fee structures to determine how compounding fines, late fees, red-light camera tickets and license suspensions can be reduced or eliminated. Chicago can pursue an income-based structure that allows for waivers of some fees and a sliding scale for low-income people with traffic violations. In Illinois, 44 percent of license suspensions were drivers from majority black zip codes and 54 percent were from low-income zip codes. Many states are ending their policy of suspending licenses for nonpayment of fees due to inherent inequities.

Timeline

100 Day Actions

- Build on the work started by the Clerk's fees and fines taskforce to review the current fee structure and develop recommendations for reform.
- Assign staff from the Mayor's office to support the ongoing work of the taskforce.
- Eliminate the minimum down payment of \$1,000 to establish a payment plan and create amnesty program for residents with overdue fees.
- Establish a moratorium on red-light camera tickets until the system and placement of cameras is reviewed for inequities.

First Year Actions and Goals

- Eliminate anti-scofflaw law for city employment
- Audit of red light camera fines

First Term Goals

- Mayor advocates in Springfield for the elimination of driver's licenses suspensions for unpaid ticket debt.

Additional Considerations***Why the time is right***

A new administration could provide a new perspective on this issue by creating an amnesty program for existing overdue fees and calling for a moratorium on red-light cameras until the city can thoroughly review the current structure and create a fee schedule that violators can actually pay without causing long-term financial harm to low-income individuals. The City Clerk has started a task force to examine this issue and develop actionable recommendations. Legislation was introduced to the General Assembly last year to eliminate the suspension of driver's licenses for inability to pay fines but Chicago officials opposed the proposal. The city's overreliance on revenue generated by parking tickets fuels the resistance so a broader solution to the city's revenue problem is needed.

What it will take

Support from City Clerk, Mayor's Office, and City Council. Ordinance to enact an income-based fee schedule.

About The Metropolitan Planning Council

For more than 80 years, MPC has provided sound, urban planning solutions to our region's toughest challenges. Through research, technical assistance, and advocacy, we have been an **independent** and **trusted change agent** to make our region more **equitable, prosperous, sustainable** and **participatory**. We've identified five guiding principles that help shape how we approach our work and ensure we are creating a region that works for everyone.

Our Approach

Challenge inequality, drive growth. Segregation and inequality in the Chicago region are too high. Economic and population growth are too low. There is an inextricable link between these two facts, and we know that real solutions to either must address both.

Bring the right people together to take on the biggest challenges. We're known for setting a common table for government, private, philanthropic, and nonprofit organizations—creating collaborations where new ideas can flourish and partnerships deepen.

Empower local voices. We work directly with people and organizations in neighborhoods throughout the Chicago region, providing technical support, making connections, figuring out financing. MPC helps write the blueprints for change, and we're there to help when the change starts, too.

Focus on the building blocks of a strong region. MPC is a thought leader for the Chicago area, with research, analysis and insight on the infrastructure investments that will form the future of the city and suburbs—transit linked to housing, land use linked to water management.

Push for efficient, effective government. Illinois has too many duplicative, sometimes dysfunctional government units, and MPC is a leader, advocate, and ally in tackling our proliferation of governments.

Our 2019 Agenda

Our 2019 initiatives broadly advances the overarching values of MPC, with each project creating a region that is more:

- **Equitable**, driving policies, investments and ideas that ensure all current and future residents can reach their full potential.
- **Prosperous**, supporting commitments that bring resources, development, and fairly paid and fulfilling jobs to all communities.
- **Sustainable**, ensuring ecological vitality, residents' health and economic stability for the long term.
- **Engaged and Responsible**, strengthening policies that enhance the participation and impact of residents in local and regional decisions, and promoting adaptive, collaborative, just and transparent governance at all levels.

Chicago and Our Region at a Glance

Figures and Trends

Population

Chicago region: 8.5 million (2016)

Chicago: 2.7 million (2016)

By Age (2016)

	Chicago	Chicago Region
• 0 to 17 years	21.2%	23.3%
• 18 to 29 years	20.7%	16.5%
• 30 to 39 years	16.8%	14.0%
• 40 to 49 years	12.7%	13.4%
• 50 to 64 years	16.8%	19.4%
• 65 years and over	11.8%	13.4%

By Race (2012-2016)

• White	32.3%	51.9%
• Black	30.6%	16.9%
• Asian	6.0%	6.7%
• Latino	29.1%	22.5%
• Other	1.9%	1.9%

Employment

Chicago unemployment: 8.1 percent (2016)

Chicago region unemployment: 6.4 percent (2016)

Household Income

Chicago: \$50,434 (2016)

Chicago region: \$64,467 (2016)

Poverty

Chicago: 19.1 percent (2016)

Chicago region: 12.2 percent (2016)